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CHAPTER VII

THE GENETIC DEVELOPMENT OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

TO complete our analysis of the norms governing the relations of parents and children we must now glance at their development in the course of the child's life. Different themes are dominant at successive periods of the child's physical and social maturation. At first the dominant theme is the love and devotion of the parents; then their authority and responsibility come to the forefront; later the principle of reciprocity emerges as a leading idea; and lastly we see the differentiation and hidden opposition between successive generations on the surface.

Babyhood[1]

Tale babies (*bilie*, pl. *bilies*) are the darlings of the family. Totally naked except for the amulets of their spirit guardians around the neck, they are seldom quite clean. But then, bodily cleanliness is the least of the virtues amongst the Tallensi. Though I have seen babies at the sitting stage (about a year old) left alone in a shady spot for an hour or so, it is more usual for them to be in someone's care at all times of the day. Looking after baby is everybody's job—grandparents, older brothers and sisters (boys are as tender as girls with a baby), mother's co-wives, father, and, most important of all, mother.

Up to the time that it is weaned, which occurs towards the end of its third year, a baby (*bilie*) is mainly in its mother's care. For at least the first year it is wholly dependent on the breast for nourishment. It is given the breast whenever it cries or frets or the mother feels inclined to nurse it. Whenever the mother sits down to rest or has

[1] Tallensi distinguish different stages of infancy according to the feeding-habits and level of physical skill reached by the infant. They never count months or years, but a parent is often able to state roughly how many months or years have elapsed since the birth of the child, working it out, most commonly, by reference to harvest and sowing times or to the Great Festivals. A babe in arms is *bilie*; until it is weaned it is described as 'still suckling (*u na mɔyarme*)'. If it is said to be still suckling but 'eating a little porridge (*u diit sayabo biel-biel*)' one can infer that it is at least 2. The unweaned infant's stage of development is further specified by stating whether it is crawling (*u bɔyarme*) or walking (*u kycnme*) or already talking (*u vɔlomrɔme*). When the child is weaned it is said to 'have left off milk (*u tuk biihim*)'. Lastly comes the stage, at between 3 and 4 years, when it is said to be old enough to have another immediately following sibling (*u saya nyoor marɔga*)—an idea we shall explain in a later chapter. The subject-matter of this chapter is supplemented by my paper, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, cit. supra.

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593 tendencies are reconciled. The liberty to address his father by name is
576 a reassurance, to the child, of the love and solicitude that lie behind the authority his father exercises over him. Perhaps it is also an expression of the identification of father and child by the lineage principle. And the greater deference in his behaviour towards his mother than towards his father is a sign that he recognizes her control, though she seems to have only love and devotion for him. Familiarity in everyday intercourse compensates for the filial piety due to a parent in the more formal, particularly in the jural and ritual aspects, of parent–child relations. The greater overt freedom with the father compensates for the greater emphasis on respect and dependence in the child's relations with him; the franker signs of deference towards the mother compensate for the greater emphasis on her love for her child as against her authority over him.

593 Clearly there is a very high degree of consistency between the social images of the parents projected in the cultural norms of the Tallensi and the actual behaviour of children to parents. The mother is thought of as the food-giver. Her love for her children is subject to no limits or laws and her status in relation to them is almost sacrosanct. Her relations with them are based on love tempered with authority. The father is thought of as the source of discipline, the guardian of good conduct. He is strict without being harsh or tyrannous. His role is of special importance in the face of the community at large and in relation to the spiritual powers that govern human life. His relations with his children are based on his authority over them, his responsibility for them, and justice tempered with love.

Adolescence and the Principle of Reciprocity

883 For a Tale boy the years between about 13 and 20 bring changes in degree rather than in kind in his relations with his parents. There is no affective or social break to mark a transition from childhood to adulthood among the Tallensi. Even among the Hill Talis initiation into the cult of the External *Bɔyar* is not associated with adolescence; it can take place at any age. A boy's social development is a process of gradual advance along lines laid down in early childhood.[1] As he grows older

● 856 [1] Tallensi distinguish the main phases of a boy's development not by chronological age but by two criteria of a broader character, either separately or together, according to the situation. They have a physiological criterion and an economic one. Physiologically they distinguish three major phases, after babyhood, in a boy: (*a*) when he is still a 'small boy (*bumbil*)' with undescended testicles, showing, as they put it, only a 'pale scrotum (*lanzee*)'; (*b*) Pubescence, denoted by the verb *sol*, to mature physically, and marked by the testicles descending (*lana sigərəme*) and the emergence of pubic hair (*saŋkpeɾuŋ kɔbɔt*). They say 'he has matured completely (*u sol ba'ahme*)' of a boy who has reached puberty and is entering manhood. (*c*) Lastly comes adulthood, when he is a 'grown man (*bonkɔrəg*)'. It is by reference to these physiological phases that men often date events in their life. The second criterion is that of advancing economic proficiency. A 'small boy' is capable only of scaring the birds from the newly

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he grows more and more proficient in the economic skills he began to acquire in childhood and better versed in the details of his culture. By the time he is 20 or so he knows most of what is known to his people about farming and animal husbandry, hunting and fishing, and building. He is wholly imbued with the values of his culture and has a good working knowledge of its institutions and customs. It is enough to enable him to play his part as a young man in the life of his community, but there is still much to learn which only years of experience and responsibility will give him. He is, however, an active if unimportant participant in corporate activities of the lineage and clan, and in the management of family affairs, with a right to his own opinions. In step with his growing social maturity a boy's field of social relations increases in range and in depth. His father's authority begins to loom larger, but at the same time his father's responsibilities on his behalf also increase and his own self-differentiation advances; and a theme that was of minor effect in their relationship hitherto comes into prominence. This is the principle of reciprocity.

During this period the identification of father and son is greatly deepened. It grows out of the intimacies and co-operation of everyday life. As they work side by side on the farm the father teaches his son farming skills and lore. When he performs a sacrifice at home his son is his assistant, learning from him how to carry out such rites, and what doctrines and beliefs lie behind them. In such situations he learns the names of his ancestors and begins to understand the structure of the lineage system and where he fits into it. He makes the acquaintance of matrilateral and sororal kin who come to take part in rites of this sort. The division between the men of the lineage and the women of the lineage, and the distinction between the father's side of the family and the mother's side become of direct practical relevance to him. Sometimes a man will call his adolescent and adult sons to him and tell them various things they ought to know in case he gets ill or dies. He tells them about his farms and other property, about his debts and those who owe him debts, and, a most important matter, about his ancestor and medicine shrines. In doing this he is, in effect, telling them what he knows of the history and traditions of his lineage and clan. These are matters which a man does not speak about to his daughters or wives. If they learn of them it is only incidentally, through listening to the conversation of the men. Daughters and wives are present at domestic sacrifices to ancestor spirits, but only sons are allowed to share in the cult of a man's private medicine shrines. Most important of all is the responsible

sown farms or from the ripening grain; a lad of 7 or 8 can be trusted to take care of sheep (*dzɨl pihi*); older boys, up to the age of 14 or 15, are cattle herds (*hiem nigi*) and already help with the hoeing; after the age of pubescence a boy works on the farm side by side with the men—he farms (*u hɔɔrome*). These phases are also used to date events, often in conjunction with the physiological criterion.

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tion for her remains. He still helps her to cultivate her ground-nut plot, if he has no younger brothers to take this on, and assists her in other ways. Later on, when he marries, his intimacy with his mother will be revived. It is to her *dug* that he brings his wife and in her care that he places the girl.

A girl grows away from her father as she approaches puberty. This is not due to physiological taboos, for there are none connected with a girl's puberty or with menstruation in general. There are no ceremonies to mark a girl's attainment of physiological maturity, nor is there any break in her affective relations with her parents. The only significant break in the steady process of social maturation for a girl is her first marriage. Her growing away from her father is due to the sexual division of labour and the corresponding division of interests in the family. Though there is no barrier to ordinary social intercourse between the sexes in a domestic family, there is the separation of interests and activities that we have mentioned before, and adolescent boys and girls are caught up in it.

A girl of 13 or 14 years and over does not run to her father and cuddle up to him as her 6- or 7-year-old sister might do. She is with her mother and the other women most of the day assisting with the more arduous domestic tasks. She helps to clean the house, to fetch water and collect shea fruit or firewood, to grind the millet, to cook, and to care for the younger children. At harvest time, or when they are beating the floors of their rooms, she does a full day's work with the other women. She is already adept in all these feminine skills and is well versed in all the gossip of the women. A girl of 12 or 13 can be left in charge of the house for a day or two while her mother is away. She goes to market by herself to buy or sell things for her mother; and also, a more important consideration for her personally, to display her charms and flirt with the young men. She accompanies older girls on firewood parties or when they go to dance at funerals.

When a girl approaches puberty her mind is set upon marriage. Tallensi estimate a girl's stage of development before marriage by the appearance of her breasts. Leaving aside betrothal of a girl in childhood, which does not require her consent, a girl is not considered to be mature enough for serious courtship until her breasts are formed (*u biiha n-yi*). She is then called a maiden (*pɔɣasarət*). Before that stage, when her breasts are budding (*u biiha m-pukət*), suitors may already be coming to her or soliciting her parents. A girl may be married before she menstruates (*lu sie*), though it is not considered seemly for her husband to sleep with her until she is capable of child-bearing. When her suitors come to her, probably the only person who knows which of them she likes best is her mother; and if she and her lover decide to elope her mother may help them. As we know, the bonds of affection between mother and daughter remain as strong as ever after the latter's marriage

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spirit, perpetuating, on the religious plane, their common dependence on her in her lifetime.

It must not be thought, however, that friction between full siblings never occurs. That would be contrary to human nature, the natives often declare. As amongst most peoples, sibling solidarity conceals a strong element of rivalry. Indeed there is one circumstance in which it is taken for granted that *soog* siblings will be prone to quarrel all their lives, even if they do not set up separate homesteads. Two successive children of the same mother and father are regarded as born rivals. The second of the two children, irrespective of sex, is called the *nyeer* of the first. The first *nye* (verb = immediately precedes) the second, who *tayal* (verb = immediately follows) the first in birth order. The definition applies strictly to birth sequence, not to survival order. A child is not its older *soog* sibling's *nyeer* if between them their mother had another child who died in infancy, or a miscarriage—for a miscarriage counts as a birth. The concept *nyeer* is regularly used to indicate an infant's degree of maturity. An infant that has a *nyeer*, or is old enough to have a *nyeer*, is entering the second conventionally recognized stage of social development, childhood proper. So if a native is asked about the stage of development reached by a particular child and says, 'It has a *nyeer* (*u mar nyeer*)' or 'It is fit to have a *nyeer* (*u saya nyeer maraga*)', one can infer that the child is between 3 and 5 years old—or, to keep to native categories of thought, that it is weaned, no longer needs the constant care of its mother or a nursemaid, and is beginning to fend for itself, to join in children's play-groups, and to become acquainted with the world outside the homestead walls.

A child and its *nyeer* are believed to be rivals almost from the day the *nyeer* is born. This predisposes them to be ill tempered with each other and wrangle on the most trivial provocation. Often when I have noticed two children bickering or annoying each other in some petty way, my companion—a man or an older child perhaps—has said with a laugh, 'There 's someone and his *nyeer* (*nit ni u nyeer nla*)'. Once at a funeral ceremony there was an argument between the two sons of the dead man. It ended with the older giving the younger a buffet across the mouth that drew blood. Relatives intervened and separated them. Then an old woman, their father's *soog* sister, with mingled pleading, protests, and sighs, dragged the younger brother away to attend to his cut lip. He was weeping with injured pride and humiliation, exclaiming, 'If he were not my older brother (*bier*) I would kill him'. The people sitting around commented scathingly on this shameless spectacle. Then someone remarked, 'Oh well, it 's a case of a man and his *nyeer*'. It had all begun, I learnt, from the younger lad's accusing the older of having appropriated something belonging to him and the older losing his temper with him for fussing about ridiculous trifles on such a solemn day.

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shrine they accompany us and listen to what we say. Will they not 869
[thus] get to know it?' His own small son Badiwona (6–7 years) is 861
extremely devoted to him. One day, affectionately patting the child, 828
he said: 'When we come out in the morning, and if he doesn't see [593]
me, he seeks about for me. If he doesn't find me he won't rest. That is why I had him initiated last year. Whatever I do he also sits and listens. Will he not get to know it thus? And when I am gone will he not say that when he was a child he used to go about with his father and used to see how his father did this and that? This is my child and I am teaching him uprightness. If he is about to do anything that is not seemly I tell him, so that when he grows up he will know upright ways.'[1]

Education, it is clear, is regarded as a joint enterprise in which 861
parents are as eager to lead as children to follow. In consequence of 856
this attitude adults are very tolerant of children's ways and especially about their learning. A child is never forced beyond its capacity. This is seen most clearly in relation to the pivotal economic activity, agriculture. However skilful a boy may be with his hoe, he will not be forced to do as much work as an adult. Men often restrain their sons of 12–14 from joining the adults in hoeing on the grounds that over-exertion is harmful. Again, women do not take daughters of 9–10 on firewood expeditions to the bush.

That skill comes with practice is realized by all. When adults are 868
asked about children's mimetic play they reply: 'That is how they learn.' Thus when a boy is 7 or 8 his father buys him a small bow so that he can go and learn marksmanship in play with his comrades. Yet the existence of individual differences in ability, both amongst children and amongst adults, is recognized and cited with reference to the acquisition of skill. Rapid learning or the acquisition of a new skill is explained by *u mar nini pam*, 'he has eyes remarkably', that is, he is very sharp. A friend of mine who was a cap maker told me how he had learnt his craft, as a youth, from a Dagban by carefully watching him at work. When he was young, he explained, he had 'very good eyes'. This conception of cleverness is intelligible in a society where learning by looking and copying is the commonest manner of achieving dexterity both in crafts and in the everyday manual activities.

[1] He learns—*u bamhora*, cognate with *bay*, to know; I teach him—*mpaanumi*.

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commits a *faux pas*, or shows lack of understanding, or misbehaves morally the comment is *u ka yam*, 'he has no sense'. The concept is used to refer both to qualities of personality and to attributes of behaviour. It is applied also in a genetic sense to describe the social development of the child. A normal child between the ages of about 6 and 9 years is said to 'have sense at length'. It knows how to behave in the social situations which confront it, whereas an infant of 3 or 4 years old does not. Yet a 4-year-old having learned bladder and bowel control is said to 'have sense' as compared with a 2-year-old. Similarly Nindoyat, (17–18 years) telling me of his sweethearting, waxed scornful about his own boyish friendship with girls two years before. 'I still had no sense then', he explained. The concept, it will be seen, is generally used relatively to a particular situation.

Children's attitude to education. In Tale society every pupil becomes in some situations a teacher. At the one extreme there are specialized ritual performances which some men do not learn till they are grey, and at the other, the toddler leaning over to play with his nursling brother is teaching the latter something about his environment. This holds right through the age-scale. Considering also the unity of the social sphere, one is not surprised to find that children have the same attitudes about education as their elders. Hence children are rarely unwilling to learn. As a rule, too, they are not ashamed of confessing failure, ignorance, or inability to do or make something. Conversely, children laugh good-humouredly at one another's deficiencies in skill or knowledge, they never jeer. Ridicule is reserved for the correction of uncouth manners, disgraceful morals, or aberrant interests.

Fundamental educational relationships. It will be evident from the preceding analysis that Tale children receive their education not only from the adults but also from older children and adolescents who are always transmitting what they know of the cultural heritage to their younger brothers and sisters and cousins. From the age of 5 or 6 years until they become fully absorbed into the economic system children often go about in small groups. These groups[1] usually consist of

[1] See M. Fortes, 'Kinship, Incest and Exogamy in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', in *Custom is King*, 1936, for ancillary information about these groups. Also M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', *Africa*, ix, 1936, for an outline of their structural context.

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867 In Taleland an infant remains confined to the house for the first three to six months or even longer. During this period its social space is extremely restricted. It has effective social relationships with its mother, sometimes its grandmother or a co-wife of its mother, or an older sibling or half-sibling, and its father—in this order of frequency
● [856] and intensity. At the age of 3 to 4, when it is beginning to talk fluently and can run about, its effective range of contacts includes all the members of the joint family and probably those of closely neighbouring related joint families. It is beginning to associate with groups of other related children belonging to its immediate milieu and to know the topography of its parental homestead and its immediate
[574] surroundings. By the age of 6 or 7 it is being taken on visits to its mother's brother's house (*ahɔb yir*) and begins to incorporate into the texture of its life its relationships with its mother's people and their settlement. A little later it commences to take a share in very simple economic duties. In this way the child's social space is continuously expanding as it grows older. The educational agencies to which it is subjected become more numerous and more diverse and its experiences more variegated as it participates in an ever-increasing range of social situations. With adolescence a great increase in mobility ensues and a new interest emerges—the opposite sex as potential spouses. This coincides with the beginning of real economic responsibility. When
[182] he reaches adulthood, the individual's social space is a function of the entire social structure in its complete ecological setting.[1] He should be capable of appropriate behaviour in any social situation which may confront the normal Talɔŋa. He is a full citizen—which means that he is actually or potentially subject to the whole gamut of constraints inherent in Tale society.

861 In the evolution of an individual's social space we have a measure of his educational development. In Taleland this is brought about not only by accretion to, but also by differentiation of, his or her field of social activity. Sex, for example, is a differentiating factor of great

[1] A person's social space is not equivalent to the entire social structure since it is included in the latter, which is never fully known to or acted on by the individual. Take, for instance, the Tale joint family. As a structural unit it can be easily distinguished and described by the anthropologist; but each member's view of the whole is unique—that of the head of the joint family is different from that of his wife or son—yet all derived from the same single unit of structure.

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into its social space. The most important of these is, universally, its mother or some one who acts as mother. Finally, there will be culturally defined ways of encouraging and stimulating or restraining a child in these efforts.

In Taleland these factors of social behaviour are notably interrelated. In general there is a marked parallelism between the trend of physiological and psychological development and that of social and cultural development—unlike our own society in certain strata of which social development lags behind psycho-physical development. A girl of 16 or so in Taleland is not only physiologically mature but has accepted the role of a mature woman in the psychological and social sense. She is married, she has economic duties to perform, she is socially responsible. A boy of the same age is pulling his full weight in the economic system, and it is regarded as entirely reasonable that he should be thinking of marriage and sex life, though it may be four or five years before he finds a wife. It should be added that physiological development among the Tallensi is probably somewhat slower than among ourselves. Accurate age norms could not, as will readily be appreciated, be established, but I have estimated that the average age of walking is about 2 years, of talking about 3 years (though single words like *mma*, my mother, and names of members of the family are used with infantile approximation at about 2 years). As far as one can judge by somatic indications, pubescence in boys commences at about 14 years. Girls, according to my wife's observations, do not as a rule menstruate before the age of about 15–16 years, by which time they have frequently been married for a year or two.

This close correlation between psycho-physical and social development is reflected in the notion held by the natives that physiological growth is a natural process, like the growth of plants and animals. The Tallensi have no elaborate transition rites to mark the passage from one stage of growth to another. Unlike many other West African peoples, they accept the onset of puberty in boys and girls, which they recognize by special terms, with the same casual rationality as they accept the cycle of time itself. Health and well-being of the body must be safeguarded with all the resources of their empirical and magical knowledge, but growth in itself is not a matter of cultural emphasis. It is of the very nature of human life. It emanates from

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827 *Naawun*, Heaven, the *ultima ratio* of Tale philosophy, corresponding
881 in this context to our notion of Nature.

812 In keeping with this conception of physical growth, children are *expected* to acquire, in due course, the elementary bodily skills—sitting,
868 crawling, walking, running, hand-eye-mouth co-ordination in eating,
855 and so forth. There is no deliberate training in these skills. Parents
856 and older siblings take an affectionate and attentive, though sporadic, interest in an infant's psycho-physical development, but do not resort to special methods of fostering it. An infant beginning to crawl is allowed to practise more or less at will, watched by mother or sister, brother or father, lest it injure itself. An infant beginning to walk is supported for a bit, now and then, by an older child, or a parent, or any one to whose care it happens to be entrusted. There is no such thing as regular training in these skills. The attention given to an infant in these respects is a function not only of its stage of physiological development, but even more so of the practical exigencies of the situation with which the parent or older child has to cope at the moment. It is quite usual to see incidents such as this: a woman is
[313] gathering guinea corn-stalks for her fire some 20–30 yards from the homestead. Her infant son of about 2½ years totters along the path to her calling out *mma*, *mma* (my mother). She appears to take no
[516] notice until he reaches her. He stands beside her, clutching her thigh tightly, while she finishes tying the bundle of guinea corn-stalks. She
[482] puts the bundle on her head and, as she wants to get back into the house as quickly as possible, swings the infant—by one arm—up to her hip and marches off. If she were not in a hurry she might walk back slowly, allowing the infant to follow her and throwing back encouraging remarks to him.

868 Since nobody thinks infants need special training by particular
854 persons, the natives have a habit of bandying them about from one member of a family to another, though grandparents, co-wives, and other children of the same mother are the most usual nursemaids. A Tale child must, from earliest infancy, learn to co-operate to its fullest capacity with the demands of practical necessity: it must learn to adapt itself to such facts of reality as the economic preoccupations of its mother. I have often seen children of about 12–18 months left sitting in the shade for half an hour or longer, quite alone, while their

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mothers are busy with some household task. A healthy infant will remain sitting thus, almost motionless, playing with a fragment of calabash, a stick, or the sand—for the idea of giving an infant a toy or some attractive trinket to occupy it when itis left alone does not occur to the Tallensi. On the other hand, when an infant clamours for attention there is always some one of its kinsfolk near at hand to render it.

The native point of view about physical growth was well illustrated in the case of two infants belonging to a single extended family which I knew well. The younger infant was a lively, healthy, inquisitive girl of about 2½–3 years old already toddling about and exploring the world. The other infant, a boy about 3 months older, had been puny and ailing from birth and, though obviously intelligent, was chronically fretful and dependent and had not yet begun to walk. In Taleland the number three is symbolical of maleness, four of femaleness. Hence it is said in their folk-lore that boys begin to walk and talk in their third year, girls in their fourth. Yet the glaring discrepancy in development between these two infants caused no anxiety to the parents of the boy, except about his health. They realized clearly the connexion between his retardation and his health, but were entirely complacent about the former. That he would walk and talk in due course was taken for granted.

The expectation of normal behaviour. It will be evident from these examples that in the cultural idiom of the Tallensi age is not conceived as a significant factor in psycho-physical or social development. Yet relative seniority determines status and rights even in children's groups and their notion of time is explicit and clear. They think of genetic development primarily in terms of maturity, which is a synthetic concept embracing both physiological and behavioural signs. Growing up, in other words, is the evolution of one's social personality as it approximates closer and closer to the fully grown, mature adult. Just as this point of view precludes deliberate and standardized methods of training children in the rudimentary bodily skills such as walking, talking, and eye-hand co-ordination in eating, so it would be incompatible with a didactic attitude about bowel and bladder control or about sexual habits and knowledge.

This point of view gives rise to a factor of great importance in Tale education, the *expectation of normal behaviour.* In any given social

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understand or to be eager to understand the language of adults, and no one would think of using ' baby talk ' to them.

As normal behaviour is always expected, no one hesitates to correct a child or adult who behaves inappropriately through ignorance, and the correction is generally accepted with alacrity and ease. If children are allowed to be present at the activities of adults, they are assumed to be interested in and to understand what is being said and done. No one would inhibit his conversation or actions because children are present, or withhold information upon which adequate social adjustment depends from a child because it is thought to be too young. Tallensi, therefore, are not surprised at the comprehensive and accurate sexual knowledge of a 6-year-old, though direct instruction in these matters is never given. As with the ordinary skills and interests of daily life, they expect children to want to know such things. *Naawun mpaan ba*, ' Heaven teaches them ', they say, or, as we should put it, it is perfectly natural.

It is known that some people learn more quickly and accurately than others, that variations in skill and ability exist. But the idea of precocity or retardation as a quality of a child's character has no place in Tale thought. A child may intrude on a situation where some one of his or her degree of maturity has no business to be and will be categorically dismissed then; but it would never be rated for being ' old-fashioned '. Every child is expected to be eager to know and to do as much as its social space and its stage of psycho-physical development permits. Hence, though it is clearly recognized that knowledge, skill, and capacity for social adjustment grow cumulatively, the Tallensi have no technique of isolating a skill or observance from the total reality and training a child in it according to a syllabus, as, for instance, we train children in dancing, the multiplication table, or the catechism. Tale educational method does not include drill as a fundamental technique. It works through the situation, which is a bit of the social reality shared by adult and child alike.

The conceptions and practices we have been considering constitute the significant factors in education by participation in practical tasks which is often described as the distinctive method of primitive societies and is as conspicuous in Taleland as in every other preliterate country. It may be observed that even in Western society the

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telling me one day about his dead mother. 'I want them to complete her funeral', he said at length, sadly, 'so that I can have my head shaved' (a ritual obligation). 'Why?' I asked. 'Well, is it not my mother?' he said. 'If I don't have my head shaved it is dirt' (ritual uncleanness).

This is typical also of the moral attitudes to the living, to parents and siblings, engendered in the normal course of family life. That is how children learn to be obedient, considerate of others, ready to co-operate, careful of household property, and so forth.

It is evident from the above examples that adjustment to authority and adjustment to equals act together in the child's acquisition of moral observances. But my observations have led me to conclude that authority is effective from an earlier age than the pressure of opinion from equals. From earliest infancy commands, accompanied by acts or gestures, are constantly being addressed to children. 'Go to your father', 'Take this', 'Come here'—as the child is lifted up, or pulled away from some object it must not touch. Until the age of 3–4, when they are walking and talking well, children appear to be indifferent to the presence of other children or indeed of adults other than their parents and members of their own family. I have watched two infants of 2–2½ years old, both walking, remain for over an hour within a few feet of each other without showing the least interest in each other. By the age of 3½–4 the Tale infant has emerged from this stage of egocentricity (as Piaget has termed it).[1] It will now run to join another child of this age or older, and likes to play with younger infants. It has now also become sensitive to public opinion to a degree not far short of an adult, and therefore capable of adjustment to others, as the following incident illustrates: I was chatting with Ɔmara and a few other adult members of his house when his little daughter Sampana, aged about 3½ years, who knew me as a familiar and friendly visitor, ran out to see me. 'Give me some money,' she asked; and her manner, intonation, and posture were so like those of the grown-up women who often half-playfully asked me for money, that the whole company burst spontaneously into loud laughter. Sampana, obviously taken aback, turned tail and fled indoors where we found her sobbing with chagrin. 'She is ashamed at our laughter,' said Ɔmara, still

[1] J. Piaget, *Language and Thought of the Child.*

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867 amused. When the child's mother tried to soothe her she first
●856 struggled and struck at her, venting her chagrin on her mother. It was
861 fully ten minutes before her mother was able to quieten her by playing with her and distracting her by making her a toy of wet clay. 'They will laugh at him (or her)' or 'His comrades will laugh at him' is the commonest motive alleged for correct behaviour. If you ask a boy of 6 or 7 why he no longer plays with the little girls he says, 'If I do my comrades will laugh at me'; and little girls say the same. Adolescents, talking about their sweethearts, who are usually clan
[626] 'sisters', explain why they avoid the girls of their own section—'because our comrades will find out and laugh at us'; and the adult is equally sensitive to public opinion.

183 *The total pattern and its genetic development.* We have seen that these categories of social behaviour are not learnt in isolation one from the other but as patterns in which interests, elements of skill, and observances are combined. The Tale housewife, going several miles into the bush to collect firewood, is using knowledge of the bush tracks and of the best places for firewood acquired over a period of years; but she is impelled also by the sense of duty to her family and her own self-esteem. The Tale farmer's devotion to his agricultural pursuits is due to a passionate interest in land and crops and to a sense of moral responsibility towards his family and his ancestor spirits. His skill is but one of the factors that affect his general efficiency.

183 These total patterns which constitute the texture of Tale cultural
867 behaviour are not built up bit by bit, by addition, during the course
155 of a child's life. They are present as *schemas*[1] from the beginning. My observations suggest that the course of development is somewhat as follows: at first the child acquires a well-defined interest associated with a postural diagram of the total pattern. The postural diagram is, as it were, a contour map, extremely simplified and crude but comprehending the essential elements and relations of the full pattern. Further experience strengthens and amplifies the interest at the same time as it causes the details of the postural diagram to be filled out, making it more and more adaptable and controllable, producing more

[1] I have taken this concept from Prof. F. C. Bartlett's *Remembering*, pp. 199 ff., though its bald application here hardly does justice to the significance given to it by Prof. Bartlett, and to its value for an understanding of primitive education.

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867 'father'. A child learns the fundamental kinship terms and has the
601 idea of distinguishing its relatives according to generation and
602 genealogical distance long before it can couple this knowledge accurately with differential behaviour towards kinsmen. The 6-year-old knows the correct terms and appropriate behaviour defining its relations with the members of its own paternal family and has grasped the principle of classification according to descent. But in practice he still confuses spatial proximity and relative age with kinship, beyond the limits of his own family. The 10–12 year old has mastered the schema, except for some collateral and affinal kinsmen, the terms for whom are known though he cannot describe the relationships.

183 Biological drives and cultural motives combine to produce variations
856 in the rates of evolution of different schemas. I have not the experimental data to give accurate or even sample norms, but a rough indication is possible. If the 6-year-old is compared with the 12-year-old in respect to e.g. knowledge of the kinship structure, of agricultural processes, of ritual, and of sex life, the 6-year-old is least advanced in knowledge of the kinship structure and ritual, and most advanced in his or her knowledge of sex life, while knowledge of agricultural processes could fall somewhere between these two levels.

V. Fundamental Learning Processes

153 In the course of the preceding discussion I have given several indications of how Tale children are taught and learn. But our investigation would be incomplete without a special consideration of the three fundamental processes utilized by the child in its learning —mimesis, identification, and co-operation. These are not the only learning techniques observable among the Tallensi, but they are the most important; and they usually appear not in isolation but in association with one another. They are most intimately interwoven in play, the paramount educational exercise of Tale children.

153 *Mimesis.* Writers on primitive education have often attributed an
828 almost mystical significance to 'imitation' as the principal method by which a child learns. The Tallensi themselves declare that children learn by 'looking and doing'; but neither 'imitation' nor the formula used by the Tallensi help us to understand the actually observable process. Tale children do not automatically copy the